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New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mohamad (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/64/631/Add.8)

The Acting President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/64/631/Add.8, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/64/631 and addenda 1 to 7, Saint Kitts and Nevis has made the necessary payments to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 126 (*continued*)

Sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the war

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 126 in order to hold a special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/257, of 2 March 2010.

On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly, I welcome all participants to this solemn meeting, as we gather today to mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. As we celebrate the end of one of the deadliest conflicts in human history, we also reflect on the immeasurable human cost of war. We are reminded yet again that we need to intensify our efforts to settle all disputes by peaceful means and reinforce our international, regional and subregional mechanisms in order to better tackle the threats and challenges we face today. Collectively, and with the needed political will, we can reinforce international peace and security around the globe and ensure a better future for coming generations.

The General Assembly, by its resolution 64/257, unanimously decided to hold a special solemn meeting to commemorate all victims of war. More than six decades ago, the wars of aggression claimed the lives of more than 60 million people. Civilians made up more than half of those who lost their lives during the war. Sixty-five years later, we honour those who fought to restore peace and freedom.

The end of the Second World War united victors and survivors in their desire for a better world. World leaders agreed never again to allow such atrocities to take place. Some six weeks after the end of the Second World War, the United Nations was established "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

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The United Nations was founded on the promise of peace and friendly relations among nations. Maintaining international peace and security remains the principal purpose of the United Nations. We are reminded today that there are still armed conflicts in the world and that civilians continue to pay a heavy price in armed conflicts.

The international community has striven to achieve progress towards reconciliation, cooperation and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We must renew that commitment. We must continue on our path towards a world in which peace, security and prosperity for all reign. Today's meeting is an excellent opportunity to renew our resolve to achieve that goal.

It gives me great pleasure to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: The names and places resonate despite the passing of many years: Stalingrad and Kursk; Auschwitz and Dachau; D-Day and the final battle for Berlin. Today, we mark the anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe — the last, we hope, of the world's total wars. Its cost was beyond calculation, beyond comprehension: 40 million civilians dead; 20 million soldiers, nearly half of those in the Soviet Union alone. Those were years of unspeakable atrocities, of lost faith and lost humanity.

Those years saw extraordinary bravery as well. The Second World War was one of the most epic struggles for freedom and liberation in history. And, in the end, idealism had its triumph too. Sixty-five years ago, in San Francisco, delegates had just begun writing the Charter of the United Nations, an Organization founded on that most human of hopes: an end to the scourge of war.

So, it is fitting today that we commemorate the war's end at a moment when nations are gathered to advance the cause of peace. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is also a document of hope: a vision for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Thanks to you, participants, we are making progress along that road. Thank you for helping us to remember the past so that we may better shape our future.

The Acting President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I call on the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today's meeting of the General Assembly is dedicated to an event that determined the fate of all humankind — and of all the world's peoples. Sixty-five years ago, States describing themselves as the United Nations and as the anti-Hitler coalition won a historic victory over Naziism.

I wish at the outset to read out an address by Mr. Dmitry A. Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation.

> "My cordial greetings go to participants in the solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.
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> "The great victory over fascism was won 65 years ago. The plots of perfidious aggressors, who drew more than 60 States into a bloody war, failed. Through colossal common effort and enormous losses, a grave threat to the very principles that form the basis of civilization was averted. The memory of the heroism of all those who, in pursuit of our common victory, selflessly fought for the future of succeeding generations lives in our hearts.
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> "Losses were suffered by nearly every family in the Soviet Union, on whom Hitler's military machine rained down in all its might. The tens of millions of lost lives will remain etched in our memories forever. Never shall we forget the boundless support and heartfelt compassion we experienced during those tragic years when a vivid awareness of the threat of annihilation united the peoples and countries on different continents and when a shared spirit of solidarity and allied interests brought nations together in a common front for a righteous cause.
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> "During the upcoming commemoration to be held in Moscow on 9 May, we shall recall all of this with pride and with pain. We shall pay tribute to the heroism of veterans — all those who prevented a global catastrophe. I take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all heads of State or Government and to all foreign guests who will participate in those

commemorative events. In Russia, this holiday is infused with special meaning.

"Today, while recalling the events of the cruellest of wars, we must understand the horrendous consequences of violence, racial and religious intolerance. Against that backdrop, the main objective of strengthening the potential of the United Nations, created by the international community to prevent new wars, becomes ever more important. Throughout all these years, the United Nations has continued to serve as the framework for contemporary international relations. The objectives set out for the Organization are still relevant. The most important of these are the establishment of an equitable world order based on the principles of humanism and mutually beneficial cooperation, the effective maintenance of international peace and security, and contributing to progressive development in the political, socio-economic, cultural, humanitarian and other areas.

"The harsh lessons of the Second World War teach us the need for solidarity in the fight against contemporary threats, respect for the norms of international law, without which a secure existence and a sustainable world order are impossible. It is only through the joint efforts of the entire international community that we shall be able to effectively confront terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and all forms of discrimination.

"The victory came at the cost of immense sacrifice. Bearing this ever in mind, we must resolutely rebuff cynical, politically motivated attempts to rewrite history and revise the outcomes and decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal. Our shared duty, both to the soldier-liberators and to future generations, is to protect the truth about the war and the significance of the victory, and to resolutely oppose those who desecrate the glory of the heroes who defeated fascism.

"Let us forever cherish the memory of those who sacrificed their lives in the name of victory, who fell in battles, who died of injuries and exhaustion, and who were tortured to death in concentration camps. Let us bow our heads in honour of their memory."

Today's meeting of the General Assembly is all the more special because of the presence of veterans of the Second World War. It was their heroism, as well as the efforts of those who worked on the home front, that forged the historic victory and secured a world free of the horrors of national socialism. The world, and not just the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the countries of Europe, will forever owe a debt that can never be repaid to those who won our freedom and independence in those fierce battles. We bow our heads in respect to these honoured veterans.

In Russia, we remember and cherish the exploits of the multinational people of the Soviet Union. It is an undisputed fact that the most significant and crucial events in the victory took place on the Soviet-German front. The battles of Moscow, Stalingrad and Kursk; the operations to liberate Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary; the battle for Berlin are all revered chapters of global military history. It was the Red Army that, on 27 January 1945, liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp. This date is now celebrated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Victory in the Second World War was also to a large extent secured by means of a breakthrough on the diplomatic front. The creation of an anti-Hitler coalition was perhaps the most significant event in the history of diplomacy. We shall always remember the help of our allies — the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France and other Governments of the anti-Hitler coalition. We are sincerely grateful to those who supported the Soviet Union during the years of war, demonstrated fraternal solidarity, and supplied us with medicine, food and arms. We highly value the contributions of those who opened the second front in Europe and fought on other fronts of the World War.

Today we pay tribute to the courage of all those Europeans who resisted Nazism. Nazism brought immeasurable suffering to the German people. We will never forget the German anti-fascists who suffered for the ideals of a democratic future for Germany, which today is a friend and important partner of Russia on the international arena.

Sixty-five years ago, we achieved a common victory over a common enemy. It was a victory that united our peoples and that current and future generations have not only the right, but indeed the duty

to be proud of. Our common responsibility is to follow that important example. Only then shall we be able to fulfil the main legacy of the authors of the United Nations Charter — "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): It is my great pleasure and honour at this commemorative meeting to read out an address by His Excellency Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, President of the Republic of Belarus:

> "On the eve of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the great victory over Nazism, I address the United Nations as the leader of a State whose long-suffering people withstood the ordeal and horrors of the war. Belarus was never an initiator of aggression or international conflict, but as a result of its geographical location our land has on several occasions become an arena of devastating wars.
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> "As a result of the inhuman genocide of the Second World War, Belarus lost a third of its citizens. Only the ashes of burnt-down villages and ruins where cities once stood were a reminder of the country's infrastructure, which was almost entirely destroyed. No other country suffered such horrible devastation.
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> "Unfortunately, the subject of the Second World War has recently been interpreted in such a way as if it were only the Western European States and the United States of America that won and served as guarantors of peace for decades. We shall not understate the contribution of any State of the anti-Hitler coalition, but let us not forget that the main thrust of the fascist aggression was directed against the Soviet Union, whose peoples were condemned to total annihilation. It was the Soviet Union that rebuffed that attack. The Soviet-German front line was four times as long as all of western fronts put together. It was at this front that Hitler's Germany suffered 75 per cent of all its casualties.
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> "We are rightfully proud that Belarus, together with the other peoples of the Soviet Union, made a principal contribution to the great victory over fascism. We liberated not only our territory, but the whole of Europe, giving the continent a chance to be as prosperous and successful as it is now. No one should forget who truly brought freedom and peace to Europe for many decades. The European unity of today is founded on the victory of 1945.
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> "Yet in a paradoxical twist of life, the united Europe that once thanked its liberators with tears in its eyes is today in no hurry to invite into the common home those who did not spare their own lives to save it from fascist slavery. Europe fences itself off by various restrictions and far-fetched claims.
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> "My people have a genetically instilled code of understanding that any confrontation among States is life-threatening as it can grow into a global catastrophe. That is why the sovereign European Belarus has persistently and consistently pursued an exclusively peace-loving foreign policy.
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> "Sixty-five years, ago the victorious States set for future generations the tremendous moral and political task of drawing the right lessons from history and of forever preventing global tragedies from recurring. Our response to the challenges of today should be a rapprochement of peoples on the basis of humanity and universal spiritual values.
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> "It is high time to relegate to the dustbin of the cold war stereotypes of good or bad States that create dividing lines even between countries that once fought together against fascism. I am convinced that the noblest manifestation of respect we could pay to the memory of that generation would be to adopt a just and non-confrontational policy of multilateral cooperation and joint opposition to common threats, with a view to preventing deadly conflicts.
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> "The tragic experience of the Second World War led the international community, including Belarus, to establish the United Nations. Regrettably, however, the many causes of war — which require joint and decisive action by all States to address — are not things of the past. The disturbing list of those causes include aspirations to world supremacy, poverty, artificial barriers to trade, xenophobia, fanaticism and ignoring the right of peoples to chose their own path to development while imposing a single model of development.

"Belarus has always been and will continue to be an important factor in the security and stability of the European continent and the world as a whole. The United Nations has in us a reliable and active partner in combating the illicit proliferation of nuclear weapons and fissile material, the trafficking in drugs and persons, illicit migration and attempts to rewrite the outcome of the Second World War. The citizens of Belarus will continue to spare no effort to promote cooperation, peace and stability."

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; potential candidates and countries of the Stabilization and Association Process Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; as well as the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan align themselves with this statement.

We are here today to solemnly commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. We have come together to mourn the deaths of the military and civilian men, women and children who lost their lives as victims of war. We have also come together not only to condemn totalitarian ideologies, but also ideologies that incite the hatred, intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia that were so deeply rooted in a conflict that — as pointed in the second preambular paragraph of resolution 64/257, echoing the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations — "brought untold sorrow to mankind". We also want to stress our rejection of any new form of exclusion — be it motivated by economic, religious, gender or any other reason — that could pose a threat to our citizens today.

Our purpose here today is to remember the innocent victims of the war and to underscore the fundamental values that led to the establishment of the United Nations. Although it has been repeated on countless occasions, we should always bear in mind the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, wherein we together agreed to resolve ourselves to

"reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

"to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

"to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

At the same time, we wish to express our deep gratitude to the millions of people who gave their lives so that countries in Asia, Africa and Europe could live in peace, confident that human rights would be respected. For Europe, not only did the Second World War take place in a large portion of our continent; it also took the lives of many Europeans, ruined the economy and resources of Europe and caused incalculable damage. As a result, the European spirit was profoundly affected and the continent's place in the world put into question.

Since the end of the Second World War, Europe has striven to put an end to attacks on democracy. It has often been said that crises give rise to progress and provide an opportunity for reflection and action. Without a doubt, the history of the European Union can be seen as the history of a success that is intimately linked to the ravages of war. With a view to preserving Europe from those horrors, some wise and visionary European leaders launched a new project — European integration — which was both a vision for overcoming the horrors of the past and a road map towards that new vision. That project was launched 60 years ago on 9 May. Today, we celebrate that date as Europe Day, a day of peace and unity.

That vision has proven to be sound, for it has brought stability, progress and solidarity to the continent. More recently, it has allowed us to take another step forward towards a new Europe united under the Lisbon Treaty, whose goal is to strengthen Europe's voice in the world. The preamble to the Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, recalls "the historic importance of the ending of the division of the European continent and the need to create firm bases for the construction of the future Europe" and confirms our "attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law".

Today, our continent and the entire world face new challenges of varying kinds, in particular those highlighted at the Millennium Summit. We have the necessary resources, technology and experience to

promote development, security, human rights and the rule of law throughout the world. We share common interests in achieving those goals. We should join our efforts to meet those challenges, as we did almost 65 years ago when peace and freedom defeated war and oppression.

On this day of commemoration, our thoughts are with those who suffered and sacrificed their lives for our freedom and, consequently, for the goals of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we invest our hopes and resolve in our common future and in the progress that all of us have agreed together to achieve in the General Assembly.

Mrs. Atayeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): On the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, there has been a renewed upsurge of general interest in the root causes of and direct reasons for the conduct and consequences of the bloodiest of conflicts in human history. An honest and objective assessment of events and the facts concerning those harsh years is needed today, not only to honour the memory of the tens of millions of those who died in the fight against fascism, but also as lessons to current and succeeding generations.

The truth about the war is necessary for a correct understanding of its lessons, given the current trends of global development aimed at bringing together all peace-loving democratic forces to meet the threats and challenges of the twenty-first century, in which the world faces the threats of terrorism, violent propaganda and inter-ethnic and religious intolerance.

In independent and neutral Turkmenistan, as in all countries, we recognize the scale of our common victory over Nazism, the evilest of scourges of the twentieth century. Even though the Great Patriotic War, which was an integral part of the Second World War, was fought far from the borders of our country, its repercussions reached into every Turkmen home. There was no family in Turkmenistan that did not in some way feel the dark impact of the war, which left a tragic stamp on the fate of our people.

From the very first days of the war, all life in Turkmenistan and other Soviet Union republics was put on a war footing. Turkmen soldiers fought on all fronts. Over 78,000 were decorated with titles and medals; over 100 individuals were decorated with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Twenty became full knights of the Order of Glory. A great many Turkmen soldiers fought as partisans, and tens of thousands fought in battles for their homeland, and the Turkmen people are proud of their exploits.

During the war years, Turkmenistan served as one of the most important home fronts, and the heroism of those who worked on the home front was in no way less than that of those who fought on the battlefields. A great many people were evacuated from fronts to Turkmenistan in these very difficult circumstances.

The main burden of work in the collective and state farms fell on women, the elderly and the young. The Turkmen people opened their homes to close to 32,000 women, children and elderly people who were forced by the war to leave their homes.

During the war years, 38 military hospitals were founded in Turkmenistan, at which over 43,000 injured soldiers were treated. A great many of those returned to the front afterwards. Workers in Turkmenistan worked full-bore to contribute to victory.

Gifts were sent and clothes and resources gathered for the construction of tanks and aircraft for the front. As a result of these donations, seven tank columns and seven squadrons of aircraft were purchased. It is particularly noteworthy that Turkmen women contributed 7,390 kilos of gold and silver in the form of silver and gold ethnic jewellery, to the defence funds. This comprised close to 80 per cent of all noble metals collected throughout the country at the time.

The people of Turkmenistan will never forget the enormous contribution made by its valiant sons, daughters and steadfast workers to our common victory over fascism. We cherish the memory of the soldiers who fell in the war and those who returned to their homes following victory. Their names have all been inscribed in remembrance books. Every participant in the war is accorded the greatest care and consideration.

The Second World War was the most bloodthirsty and destructive war, but it came to an end and its outcome led to significant political changes on the international stage. A trend towards cooperation between States with different social systems gradually emerged with the aim of preventing new global conflicts. In the post-war period, a system of security and cooperation among countries was established. At the end of the war, the United Nations was created.

The President of Turkmenistan, Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, speaking in this Assembly,

highlighted that Turkmenistan, whose neutral status is supported by resolution 50/80 A, is a consistent champion of the strengthening of the role and influence of the United Nations in international affairs and committed to upholding global peace and security. All our cooperative initiatives with the United Nations are aimed at achieving these objectives.

Today, we extend our gratitude to and mark the memory of all those who fought on the battlefields of the war to allow us to live on this Earth. Our repeated commemorations of the exploits of our sons and daughters are historically just. The world would be a very different place if the Soviet people had not survived those very difficult war years. We bow to them for having saved the world, for clear skies and for having given us the gift of life. Our duty is to come together and to preserve their memory for future generations.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to thank you, Sir, for having convened this special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Russian Federation, Belarus and Turkmenistan.

Throughout human history, events of increasing scale and importance have taken place. Among such unforgettable events was the victory over fascism, the sixty-fifth anniversary of which is so widely marked by the international community this year. This historic date is sacred to veterans of the war, the elderly and post-war generations, as it symbolizes the patriotism, selflessness, steadfastness and courage of our parents and grandparents.

Alongside the other peoples who rose up against the fascist threat, the people of Tajikistan contributed to ensuring this historic victory. Over 300,000 Tajiks, some one fifth of its population, fought on fronts with valour and heroism; 92,000 fell on the battlefield. During those harsh years, it was difficult to find a single family that was not impacted by the bitter war. Over 50,000 Tajiks were awarded medals and titles; 54 were recognized with the highest State honour, Hero of the Soviet Union. During the war years, the 98th infantry unit, the 98th and the 140th cavalry brigades, the 61st cavalry division and the 31st battalion were formed in Tajikistan.

The people of Tajikistan donated their savings to form and send to the front a tank column and a fighter squadron. Artillery and other military specialists were inducted and trained at military academies evacuated to the capital of Tajikistan from western cities of the Soviet Union, including the Kharkov technical aviation institute, the Volchansk military school of aviation mechanics and the Orlovsk infantry academy.

During the war years, Tajiks contributed some 1 billion rubles and 655,200 kilograms of grain. The country manufactured weapons, uniforms and parachutes. Factories in Feodosiya, Simferopol, Poltava, Moscow and other cities of the western Soviet Union removed to Tajikistan. Tajikistan sent necessary food and other products to the front.

The victory achieved in the Second World War is of special importance in today's circumstances, when the international community must pool its efforts against new global challenges and threats. The States Members of the United Nations must spare no effort to settle all disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and in a manner that safeguards international peace and security. That is what resolution 64/257, adopted unanimously on 2 March 2010 and entitled "Sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", calls upon us to do.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): We are all gathered here today at the United Nations to pay tribute to the memory of the heroes and victims of the Second World War. The war taught humankind the harsh lesson that we cannot accept the deaths and suffering of millions of individuals. No single idea, concept or political philosophy can justify the pain suffered in the war. On this day, I wish from this high rostrum to express my deep gratitude to all those who, through their timeless exploits on the battlefield and their selfless labour on the home front, saved humankind from the scourge of fascism. I bow to their memory.

The war affected almost every family of our common country, the Soviet Union. I am the daughter of a soldier who fought the war from beginning to end. Despite his injuries, my father, like many others, returned to the front repeatedly. We owe our hard-won victory to the memory, resolve and heroism of the defenders of our country. Victory was achieved not only by force of arms, but also by the spirit of the peoples of the Commonwealth of Independent States

(CIS) and the anti-Hitler coalition. We gave everything to achieve victory. More than 1.7 million Kazakhs participated in the war. Sadly, the sixty-fifth anniversary of the victory is being marked by just over 50,000 veterans of the war, for close to half a million sons and daughters of Kazakhstan did not return from the battlefields.

In decorating veterans with commemorative medals, President Nazarbayev said that their heroism set an example of surpassing love for one's homeland. For their actions in the Great Patriotic War, close to 500 Kazakhs — four of them twice — were awarded the highest recognition as Heroes of the Soviet Union. With respect to the quality of Soviet heroism, it may not be appropriate to count numbers, but we and everyone here must do so. From this high rostrum, we merely seek to underscore the meaning of the Second World War to each citizen of our former common homeland. Kazakhstan is fifth in the number of citizens named Hero of the Soviet Union, and 110 Kazakhs were awarded third-class Orders of Glory.

In protecting Soviet lands, Kazakh Heroes of the Soviet Union showed great courage and heroism. We pay tribute to the exploits and recognize the prowess of the guards of the Fourth Infantry Division, which was formed in Kazakhstan and participated in the Battle of Moscow. The glory of their actions is known far beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union and the CIS. Twenty-eight Kazakh soldiers, engaged in the bitter fighting at Dubosekovo Station just outside Moscow, prevented fascist tanks from breaking through to the capital at the critical moment. All of them died, and all were recognized — posthumously, unfortunately — as Heroes of the Soviet Union. In the history of that terrible war, we will forever remember the words of the guards: even though the country was enormous, not a single square centimetre could be ceded, because the entire country was sacred to us.

The war drew no distinction between men and women. I therefore believe it necessary to read out the names of the daughters of the Kazakh people — infantrywoman Manshuk Mamyetova and sniper Alia Moldagulova — who became heroic representatives of the Soviet East and were decorated with the highest military honour as Heroes of the Soviet Union. My fellow countrywomen fought in the defence of Brest, at the Kursk Bulge and in the Battle of Stalingrad, and liberated Europe. Kazakh warriors Rakhimzhan Koshkarbayev and Ilya Siyanov were among those who stormed the Reichstag.

We must not forget those who struggled on the home front. Their living conditions were very similar to those experienced on the front lines. Military factories were evacuated from the European part of the Soviet Union to Kazakhstan, where civilian workers toiled selflessly. During the war, every fourth citizen of my country was drafted to build defence and front-line facilities. They worked with shovels and spades to achieve victory. The film industry was also evacuated to Kazakhstan, where the vast majority of wartime films were produced.

Kazakhstan gave shelter to millions of refugees and evacuees of various nationalities and faiths, laying the solid foundations of the current culture of tolerance in our country. We abide unswervingly by the principle of international and inter-faith understanding.

I should like to state here that its memory of the destructiveness of the war led to Kazakhstan to take the political decision to reject the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal. The Semipalatinsk nuclear testing grounds have been closed and, with our neighbours of Central Asia, we initiated the creation of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. This contribution illustrated my country's sense of responsibility towards the right of our elder veterans to work and live in peace.

The Second World War revealed the fragility of peaceful and constructive existence. Its lessons concerning the need to enhance collective efforts to preserve peace and to strengthen cooperation among all peaceful civilizations must be learned by all Members of the United Nations. Maintaining peace is the best way for States to demonstrate their desire to prevent arms proliferation, wars and conflicts.

This is a very important year for the non-proliferation process, and my country is among those that endorse the concept of a world free of nuclear and other forms of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): It is an honour for my delegation to take the floor at this special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The United Nations was founded in 1945 in the determination to save

succeeding generations from the scourge of war following the tragedy of the Second World War, which had inflicted unprecedented suffering upon humankind.

Today, Ukraine, along with all participants of the anti-Nazi coalition, is marking a great day in its history — a day of glory and the triumph of justice. We celebrate our joint victory in the Second World War. At the same time, it is also a day of sorrow, when the world grieves over the millions of lives lost in terrible battles of unprecedented cruelty. We pay tribute to everyone who fought for the liberation of their homelands, the European continent and the entire world from inhuman tyranny, as well as to all victims of war.

My country paid too high a price for the victory, having lost more than 10 million of its best sons and daughters. Seven million Ukrainians were killed at the front line and while fighting as members of underground units and resistance movements. Over 2 million Ukrainians were enslaved in Nazi concentration camps. Hundreds of thousands perished in prisons and in bondage. By war's end, the overall population of the country had declined by 25 per cent. Ukraine suffered severe devastation, with entire towns and villages being reduced to ashes. The horrible bloodshed in my homeland continued for 40 months.

Today, less than one third of those who took part in or witnessed the war remain among my compatriots. We will never forget their heroic exploits. Our solemn duty is to do our utmost to ensure that veterans who fought for freedom enjoy the care and support of today's generation.

We remember all those who stood in the way of the brown plague of Nazism during the brutal years of the Second World War. We are proud of the courage, determination and unity of those who opposed evil, violence and war atrocities. Having gathered here today to mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we are resolved to prevent the recurrence of such catastrophes. Let us draw wisdom from the lessons of the past to guide us in the future.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in emphasizing the importance of this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly convened in celebration of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and in commemoration of all its victims.

The Second World War was a great tragedy that demonstrated the destructive consequences of tyranny and of disregard and contempt for human dignity, rights and freedoms. Victory was achieved through the heroic efforts and unprecedented solidarity of many nations, as well as at the cost of untold human suffering and the lives of millions of people. The horrors of the war, the sacrifices made and the victims themselves should never be forgotten.

I would like to point out with particular pride that, alongside other nations, Azerbaijan and its citizens made a significant contribution to overall victory in the Second World War. Although Azerbaijan was not a zone of military operations, it incurred tremendous losses during the course of the war. From 700,000 to 800,000 Azerbaijanis fought on the battle front as well as in partisan detachments and anti-fascist resistance movements throughout Europe, and around a half million of them died in consequence.

On the eve of the Second World War, the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, ranked as one of the largest oil-producing centres in the world and was the main supplier of oil and related products within the Soviet Union. Azerbaijani oil covered about 70 per cent of the Soviet army's needs during wartime.

Azerbaijan produced 130 types of armaments and their components. Between 1941 and 1945, almost a half million Soviet Union armed forces personnel underwent treatment in hospitals throughout Azerbaijan.

For their heroism, courage and determination, many Azerbaijani officers and soldiers, as well as those who served on the home front, were decorated with the highest Government orders and medals.

In the immediate post-war period, the successful establishment of multinational judicial institutions for the purposes of prosecuting and punishing crimes of international dimension and scope demonstrated how effective international justice can be when there is a political will to support it. The response to the overwhelming horror of the crimes perpetrated during the wartime occupation of large parts of many nations served as a basis for the founding of the United Nations.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the international community, acting chiefly through the United Nations, proclaimed and set down in

international instruments a compendium of fundamental values, such as peace and respect for human rights.

The lessons of the great victory over fascism are of current relevance in view of the importance of effectively addressing the major threats and challenges affecting the basic elements of the contemporary international legal order and undermining the national unity and stability of States.

Regrettably, due to the manifest failure of individual States to fulfil their most basic and compelling responsibilities, as well as to the collective inadequacies of international institutions in the years since the end of the war, efforts to bring about a peaceful, just and prosperous world have not always been consistent or successful. The world's conspicuous silence in certain instances, particularly with regard to wars of aggression, foreign occupations and ethnic cleansing, has served to generate mutual mistrust and to reinforce the sense that double standards and resort to military strength are prevalent in international relations.

Today more than ever before, we need to unite our efforts and speak in one voice against aggressive nationalism, international terrorism, extremism, racial discrimination, intolerance and insatiable annexationist aspirations, all of which represent a profound challenge to the principles and ideals of peace, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Undoubtedly, as far as the most serious international crimes are concerned, more should be done to sharpen the tools for ending impunity. Above all, security and stability can best be ensured when we are able to achieve the resolution of present-day armed conflicts in a committed manner, based on full and unequivocal respect for the letter and spirit of international law.

Unfortunately, it appears that some members of the international community are still far from reaching this basic understanding. However, it is for their own good that they should realize that lack of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and contempt for human rights are hazardous, to say the least, in view of the irreversibility of a resolute response in favour of peace, justice and prosperity.

Azerbaijan recognizes the central role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, promoting sustainable development and advocating human rights and fundamental freedoms, and believes that the multifaceted and interconnected challenges and threats confronting our world today can be better addressed through a reformed and credible United Nations. It is in the interest of us all to further strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations and to ensure greater transparency in the decision-making process, accountability in performance and shared responsibility within the Organization.

Mr. Jeenbaev (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): One cannot speak of the victory in the Second World War without emotion. The scale of the events of that period was fateful in its meaning for all humankind. The great victory was achieved through unimaginable efforts made by all our people and the sacrifice of many human lives. We will always remember that victory was achieved by the efforts of the people of many countries.

Today, this most memorable of dates is widely marked by all peoples who suffered the poisons of war and the horrors and loss of a whole generation. In all human history, never have more victims fallen in defence of the freedom and independence their motherland. Immense loss and suffering were borne by the brave soldier-liberators and workers on the home front. The unity and steadfastness of the people guaranteed complete victory over the enemy. Over 360,000 sons and daughters of Kyrgyzstan fought in the Second World War, and they brought honour upon themselves. A great many of their names are etched in gold in the history of this most holy of patriotic wars. The motherland fully recognizes the bravery of Kyrgyz soldiers, for which they and their commanders were decorated with medals and given titles. Twenty-one of them became full Cavaliers of the Order of Glory and more than 70 Kyrgyz citizens were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

On this day, I would like especially to note the contribution and enormous efforts of the Kyrgyz home front in achieving this great victory. From the very first day of the war, Kyrgyzstan's industry was placed on war footing. The entire agricultural sector was working for the front. The men who went to the front were replaced by women, young people and older persons. It was they who kept the cogs of industry turning.

Passing years take us ever further away from 1945. However, our gratitude to these veterans is undiminished. The most important thing is that tears were shed and suffering was felt. At the cost of their

lives, our sisters and brothers made it possible for us to live free and independent. We cherish their memory. Their example compels us to make new achievements towards a more prosperous world. From this rostrum, I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to the General Assembly for having declared 8 and 9 May as days of remembrance and reconciliation. I would like once again to thank all Member States for their support for resolution 64/257, on the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Today, all of progressive humankind looks towards the United Nations, where key issues are being discussed that have an impact in the Organization's future activities. In the very near future, we will commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of this unique Organization, which is a common home for all the peoples of the planet. The world and the international situation have changed dramatically in the years of its existence. Peace followed the end of that destructive war, but new threats and challenges have emerged. Kyrgyzstan is fully aware that new steps are needed today to give fresh momentum to the activities of the United Nations so that it can respond appropriately to rapidly changing developments throughout the world. Time is both unrelenting and short. The veterans are passing away. Our duty is to support all war veterans and surround them with warmth and care so that we can inherit both their bravery and their responsibility.

Mr. Askarov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Today, as we mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the great victory won thanks to the bravery of our brotherly peoples, we pay tribute to all our countrymen who lost their lives on the battlefields and on the home front.

I associate myself with the statements made by my colleagues and now wish to speak of the participation of Uzbekistan and its people during the Second World War. I would first like to share a few statistics.

Uzbekistan's population in 1941 was just over 6 million. During the years of the destructive Second World War, 1.6 million men were drafted to the front. Nearly a fourth of them — over 458,000 — died liberating their country and fighting for independence and freedom from fascism: their own and that of other European peoples. A further look at those tragic figures reveals that Uzbekistan lost almost 8 per cent of its population as a result of that bloody war. One out of 14 of our country's citizens died. The victory achieved by our people was at the cost of the lives of many of our citizens.

Uzbekistan's people took part in every battle of the Second World War, including the battles of Moscow and Kursk, the liberation of Belarus, Ukraine and the countries of Eastern Europe, and, of course, the battle for Berlin. The ancient Uzbek cities of Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara, among others, served as centres for the care of a million Soviet soldiers. Uzbekistan also provided more than 1,000 aeroplanes to the common war effort.

I should like to draw attention to the fact that the war not only brought all peoples together; it also set an example of understanding from which the world can learn. Over the years of the war, 2 million refugees were transferred to Uzbekistan, where they found shelter.

One of the most striking illustrations of the sincere warmth, charity and generosity of the people of our Republic was their mass welcome into their homes of more than 200,000 orphans from Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic republics, Poland and other countries. People lined up at the orphanages to adopt the suffering children. This outpouring was unprecedented in any other country. It is well known that many Uzbek families took in and cared for five, seven, ten and sometimes more child victims of that terrible war. The entire world knows the story of the blacksmith Shamakhmudov and his wife, who adopted and raised 14 orphans, including Russians, Belarussians, Moldavians, Ukrainians, Letts, Jews, Kazakhs, Tatars and others of various nationalities. At that time, the famous Uzbek poet Gafur Gulyam wrote a poem, "You are not an orphan", that later became famous in a translation by the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova:

> "Are you really an orphan? Calm down, darling,
> The big country, overflowing with maternal love,
> Like a kind sun shining down on you,
> Will keep your childhood safe."

On 9 May, we in Uzbekistan will commemorate the coming together of all peoples. Our President will participate, as will veterans and disabled persons who took part in the Second World War. There are 11,000 such people in my country, and nearly 200,000 of those who worked on the home front are still alive. By presidential decree, veterans and disabled persons from the Second World War will be decorated with a medal

commemorating the sixty-fifth anniversary of the victory.

Allow me also to draw attention to the fact that there are no old-age homes in Uzbekistan: pensioners are surrounded by their families and friends. We pay tribute to their achievements on both the front lines and the home front.

The creation of the United Nations following the end of the Second World War was a very important development. I hope that, with the cooperation of all Member States and with goodwill among the peoples of the world, the efforts of the United Nations will prevent such terrible events from ever happening again.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): First, allow me to thank everyone for attending this commemorative meeting of the General Assembly. I would also like to welcome the esteemed veterans of the Second World War who are present here, as well as to join previous speakers in congratulating everyone on the sixty-fifth anniversary of Victory Day. The annual commemoration in our countries of that historic occasion is a national event, but the biggest heroes of Victory Day have always been, and remain, our veterans, to whom we are forever indebted. They were the main protagonists in the heroic annals of our common history.

Sixty-five years later, we are here today to recall their triumph, to remember their sacrifice and to recommit ourselves to the principles for which they fought. Tens of millions of soldiers and civilians died in the Second World War. On this day of remembrance, as we mourn the lives lost, we all owe a debt of gratitude to the nations that fought for liberty and peace.

It is my honour to speak today and to note that although it was small in numbers, Armenia was one of those nations. It played a large role in achieving the triumph over fascism. From June 1941 to May 1945, approximately 600,000 Armenians were drafted into the army at a time when the population of our country was less than 1.5 million. Every third person did not return home.

Six national military divisions were formed in Armenia, of which three played an active role in the battles in the Caucasus during the war. One of the courageous brigades during the Second World War, composed primarily of ethnic Armenians and formed in Echmiadzin, Armenia, in 1943, was the 119th Tank Regiment, which was funded entirely by the Armenian diaspora in the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the United States.

It is noteworthy that many Armenians who were citizens of the anti-Hitler coalition countries also fought in the war. Just the other day, I learned about the story of Ralph Mesrobian, an American citizen of Armenian heritage, who was a member of the renowned Black Sheep fighter squadron, which was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action. There are many other examples, and I take this opportunity to thank the representatives of the Armenian diaspora present in this Hall and others for their contributions towards our common victory.

The honourable pages of the history of the Soviet army during the Second World War contain the names of three Armenian marshals, one admiral, over 60 generals, 106 Heroes of the Soviet Union and 27 Cavaliers of the Order of Glory, as well as many other high-ranking officers.

Today, we relate to our children and grandchildren the valour and sacrifice of the talented military commanders and soldiers. We also recall the victory over hatred and racism won with the blood of our fathers and grandfathers, who made it possible for all the nations of the world to build a peaceful and better life. In that connection, the Government of Armenia is devoting special attention to projects involving educating young people about the history and lessons of war, crimes against humanity and genocide. Speaking of the new generation, I am pleased to note that we have a number of young men and women present here — and who requested to be here — in the memory of their courageous grandparents, who fought in the war but who, unfortunately, are no longer with us.

Our commemoration of this day would not be complete and my role as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women would not be fulfilled if I did not mention and pay a special tribute to all the women who served in the army — and also to all those women who stayed behind and worked tirelessly in factories, farms, hospitals and schools, and who mobilized resources to defend our common principles of family values, freedom and patriotism and, by doing so, served as beacons of hope for the possibility of a better future.

Today we also remember with heavy hearts those who paid the supreme sacrifice, and we bow our heads in their memory. It is true that in war there are no victors, only survivors. We are extremely fortunate, however, to still have among us heroes of those tragic yet heroic days, and to have the opportunity to speak with them and, more important, to learn from them.

The time is long overdue to honour our heroes not only with speeches but with concrete actions. Remembrance, attention and care: these, in our view, are the essential parts of our social strategy with respect to our esteemed veterans, and the Armenian Government and National Assembly have recently enacted new legislation to further expand their benefits, including those related to financial, medical and transportation needs

In conclusion, allow me to wholeheartedly congratulate all on this day of victory and peace. The end of the war and establishment of peace were decisive for the international community in creating new and better opportunities to flourish and develop. The victory symbolizes the determination and will of nations to protect their dignity, safety and freedom. We know the price of victory and peace, and we all see their fruits on daily basis. Therefore, today we recommit ourselves, and call on others to commit themselves, to studying the lessons of the past and to realizing the principles of peaceful settlement of conflicts around the world. Indeed, that commitment is the best way to pay tribute to those who fought in the war.

To the veterans being honoured here today: grateful Armenia salutes every one of you. Thank you.

Mr. Cujba (Moldova): This year the international community is commemorating the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, one of the greatest century tragedies of the twentieth century, which put Europe and the whole of human civilization on the edge of disaster. Today's solemn meeting of the General Assembly is in memory of all the victims of those horrendous events.

We pay tribute to the millions and millions of men and women, soldiers and civilians of many nations of the anti-Hitler coalition, who died on battlefields and in death camps, who did not spare their lives in defeating fascism and bringing peace to the world. We are eternally indebted to all those who perished in the just fight for freedom and human dignity, for life and the independence of our peoples, for a better future and for a world free from affliction.

And we are particularly proud that, among others, the people of my country made their contribution to the victory.

The end of the Second World War was marked by a common victory against a common enemy. It became a common value for humankind, a value which should be held in the memory of nations to strengthen them in the face of new challenges and threats. Sadly, it was through the suffering and death of millions of people that the international community came to realize that there was a need for a system of collective security to ensure international peace. We cannot allow the horrible tragedy of the war to be forgotten.

After that enormous disaster and tragedy, the leaders of the world, guided by the vision of a united and prosperous future for the next generations, laid the foundation of cooperation and stability. The anniversary of the end of the Second World War holds special significance for the United Nations. Keeping in mind the lessons of history, the United Nations must reaffirm the purposes and principles enshrined in its Chapter, and must spare no effort in preventing and resolving conflicts by peaceful means, strengthening its capacities in peacebuilding and the consolidation of peace, and promoting democratic values.

Along with its Member States, it has to increase awareness of the universal values shared by humankind, promote a culture of peace, tolerance and cooperation and create, at the global, regional and national levels, an environment conductive to peace and common understanding. That is our sacred duty to the victims of war, to the victims of hatred, intolerance and poverty, and to those who foresaw, beyond the war, a world of peace and cooperation.

Today it is in the interest of humanity to further strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations as the central element in the system of collective security and peace. That will enable the family of nations to face the future with confidence and to achieve the noble goal of the Charter: to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

Member States will unite their efforts in dealing with new challenges and threats, with the United Nations playing a central role, and will make every effort to settle all disputes by peaceful means in

conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and in such a manner that international peace and security are not endangered.

Mr. Sobków (Poland): Let me start by thanking the Russian delegation for all its efforts to bring the commemoration of the end of the Second World War to the attention of the General Assembly. The Second World War was the most horrific war in human history. That is why it is more than appropriate and necessary to commemorate the millions of victims of those terrifying atrocities and destruction.

Poland was the first country to be attacked militarily by the Nazi forces, and it lost more than 6 million citizens in the Second World War, among them over 3 million Poles of Jewish origin. Those numbers conceal the unbelievable suffering of millions of human beings. We bow our heads before those who contributed to the demise of the Nazi Third Reich so that we might live in peace, security, democracy and the rule of law.

We pay tribute to all the soldiers from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and other nations who fought in the Red Army; we admire their heroism, enormous suffering and dedication. We grieve for those nameless victims who fought with sacrifice and no fear. But let me remind this audience that the victory of the Second World War was also the work of brave Poles.

Poland had a prominent place in the anti-Nazi coalition. Our contribution was the biggest, next to those of the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom. Poland was the first country to actively oppose Nazi aggression; our soldiers bravely struggled on all fronts of the war. Our pilots fought bravely in the Battle of Britain; our soldiers contributed to the war effort in the defence of Tobruk, the capture of Monte Cassino, the battle of the Falaise pocket and Operation Market Garden, to name just a few. Probably up to 2 million Poles served during the war in all Polish military formations: regular armies, partisan troops and underground forces. We also helped decipher the Enigma machine codes, and our intelligence experts proved to be of much value to Allied intelligence.

On this day of remembrance we should recall the Second World War, the lives lost, the countries destroyed, the horror and senselessness of it all. We should also recall that the United Nations was born out of the experiences of the war. Our peoples at that time were moved by the firm resolve to never let this happen again. We should continuously uphold that notion so that we might not ever do this again, and never allow it.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): I am honoured to represent the United States at this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly. Today, we pause from our current labours to salute those who gave their lives during the Second World War to the cause of peace and human freedom, to mourn the innocents killed and murdered during those tragic years, to honour the sacrifice of friends and allies who fought shoulder to shoulder with the brave soldiers of my country, and to remember the origins of this institution amid the ash and smoke of the most terrible war in human history.

The very term "United Nations" comes, of course, from the 1942 Declaration issued by my country and other nations engaged in a common struggle against Naziism and totalitarianism. They pledged to defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands. Those noble ideals — under such siege in 1942 — form the foundation of the international system that rose from the great devastation of the 1940s. We join together today to remember, but also to reaffirm, our commitment to the shared goal of a world free from war, oppression, fear and want.

There would be no United Nations without the Second World War. Out of that great struggle came lasting resolve: a determination to defend the inalienable rights of all people, to unite against aggression and to insist that civilians be spared during even the most furious conflict. For all the unimaginable sacrifice of the Allied forces, for all the unspeakable suffering endured by nations under occupation, for all the unthinkable devastation across Europe and Asia, we still come together today to remember the Second World War as a war fought out of the purest necessity. In Nazi Germany, we faced far more than just a rival Power; we faced a rival view of humanity: one rooted in hatred and spite, one bent on conquest and subjugation, one that sought to murder outright an entire branch of the human family, one that denied and despised the essential rights to which my nation has always aspired.

Defeating the Third Reich and the Axis Powers did not guarantee freedom and justice; but so long as Hitler ruled and ravaged, so long as vast swathes of Europe and Asia suffered under cruelty and occupation, no person could be truly free.

Sixty-five years later, we join our fellow Member States in hailing the victory of the great wartime alliance, and we are thankful that former foes have become true and enduring friends. But we look not just back, but forward, so that we may use the lessons of the past to build a future in which all nations can exercise their rights and in which all nations will shoulder their responsibilities.

We remind ourselves that, just as fascism could not be defeated by any one nation, we face a new generation of global challenges that also demand global cooperation and global solutions. We live in an era of great change, but the need to work together — to stand together against war, aggression, disease, famine, proliferation, terrorism, Holocaust denial, intolerance, bigotry, poverty and despair and to strive together to create a world that sees all people as all truly equal: that basic need for unity in the face of great challenge has not changed.

People across the world still face threats to security and stability. The enemies are different; the ideologies have different names; but we have not yet passed into a time free of dangers, and they will require courage and resolve to overcome. So we must work together to make this institution, in the words of Winston Churchill, into "a true temple of peace in which the shields of many nations can some day be hung up". We must work together to stem the tide of nuclear peril. We must spread the reach of hope, prosperity and opportunity. We must celebrate the different ways in which we have all been created. We must resist the preachers of division, hatred and extremism. And we must defend the rights that all people have but that not all people can exercise.

Since the last time the Assembly gathered in solemn commemoration of the Second World War, untold thousands of its veterans have left us, claimed in the fullness of time, not in the clang and terror of battle. That great generation fought on the seas and oceans; they stormed the beaches and liberated the camps; they kept the torch of freedom alight under the rule of the collaborators and the quislings; they shed their blood on the streets of Stalingrad, the waters near Midway and the alleys of the Warsaw Ghetto. Because of them, we remember the Second World War for more than the horrors of the Holocaust and the malice of fascism. Because of them, we remember that human beings are capable not just of unimaginable cruelty but also of unimaginable bravery. They prevailed not just through force of arms but, as President Obama put it, "with sturdy alliances and enduring convictions".

So, we must all listen to the stories of the veterans who are still with us. We must always remember what they endured so that their families could live without war and so that people they never met could live without fear. And above all, we must deepen our commitment to the cause for which they fought: peace, liberty, justice and the common humanity that links us all together and makes each of us equally precious.

On behalf of my Government, let me offer abiding thanks to all those who struggled and sacrificed alongside us during the Second World War, and the abiding friendship of the United States to all those who cherish the values of human rights, human freedom and human dignity.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the convening of this solemn special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the world's great victory against fascism. Countless brave people gave their precious lives for the victory of that unprecedentedly tragic war. We deeply mourn for and pay high tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in the war and extend our deepest condolences to all innocent victims of the invading armies.

The world's struggle against fascism, a war of untold magnitude, involved more than 80 countries and regions and about 2 billion people in Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania. The fascist invaders wreaked tremendous havoc on the world and inflicted untold devastation on human civilization. China was one of the main battlefields of the world war against fascism. The war caused over 35 million military and civilian casualties in China, ravaged Chinese civilization, and imposed heavy losses to the Chinese nation. In the face of the war, more than 50 countries, China included, worked together to form a united world anti-fascist front. They supported each other, fought heroically against fascist invaders and won the war for justice.

China will never forget the sympathy and support extended to it by all peace-loving countries and people during the war. China will never forget the Soviet Union Red Army, members of the United States Flying Tigers, and medical personnel from Canada, India and other countries who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese people and made heroic sacrifices on Chinese battlefields.

The victory of the world war against fascism marked a great triumph of justice over evil, light over darkness, and progressive over reactionary forces. It saved human civilization. History is a textbook. We must never forget the huge suffering inflicted by that barbaric and bloody war upon humankind. We should cherish peace and reconciliation more dearly and take concrete action to maintain international peace and security. Sixty-five years have passed since the end of the Second World War, but the ghost of Nazism and militarism lingers. The international community must remain vigilant. Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide for the future. Only by drawing lessons from the past can we avoid the recurrence of historical tragedies and save future generations from the scourge of war.

The victory of the world war against fascism prompted the founding of the United Nations and the formulation of its Charter and other basic norms governing international relations. Over the past 65 years, the United Nations has contributed significantly to international peace, common development and the protection of human rights. The past 65 years have also witnessed sea changes throughout the world. In the face of various global threats and challenges, the United Nations has a more important role to play. We should continue to firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter, maintain the authority and role of the United Nations and its Security Council, and strive for a brighter future for all humankind.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): We commend the delegation of the Russian Federation for proposing to the General Assembly the holding of this special solemn meeting.

The Second World War was the most devastating conflict ever witnessed in history. Today, we gather in this Hall to honour the memory of all those who perished in that heroic struggle for peace, justice and human dignity. We also gather to remind ourselves of our shared responsibility to prevent the world from ever enduring such a tragedy again.

In 1942, Brazil joined the Allies and actively supported them by providing critical air and naval bases, in addition to supplies and strategic materials. More importantly, in 1944 Brazil deployed an expeditionary force of over 25,000 troops to the European battlefront. Many Brazilians died in this endeavour. While war was still raging, we took interest in diplomatic efforts designed to establish a new international organization to replace the old League of Nations. We participated actively in the San Francisco Conference and became a founding Member of the United Nations.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This Organization was created "to save successive generations from the scourge of war". Maintaining international peace and security remains one of its core functions in the international multilateral system built after the war. However, the United Nations was meant to be and is much more than that. It has become the most powerful instrument at the disposal of the international community for the promotion of a broad set of values, principles, norms and institutions in the service of peace, development and human rights. For millions of people, it was and still is the difference between life and death.

It is true that not all of the expectations of 1945 have been met. Continued efforts to improve the United Nations are certainly needed, including as a tribute to the ultimate sacrifice made by millions in the Second World War. This should not, however, efface the unique and irreplaceable role the United Nations plays and will continue to play in so many domains.

It is to those who perished in the Second World War, to those whom the United Nations has helped to save since then and to all those whom we have sadly failed to save that we should be held accountable. For them, we must all renew our commitment to the purposes and principles of this Organization.

Ms. Shalev (Israel): We are gathered here to commemorate those who sacrificed so that humankind might prevail over madness and hope might prevail over hate. The State of Israel pays eternal homage to the men and women who saved the world at humankind's darkest hour.

We remember the victims for whom redemption never came. One victim was Etty Hillesum, a Dutch

Jewish woman and a brilliant writer and thinker. She was murdered in Auschwitz on 30 November 1943 as part of the Nazi's diabolical plan to exterminate the Jewish people. Shortly before her death, Etty wrote:

> "Somebody else will carry on from where my life has been cut short. And that is why I must try to live a good and faithful life to my last breath. In this way, those who come after me do not have to start all over again."

Etty's words are a powerful reminder of the path that we must take so that the sacrifice of those who fought and those who died will never be in vain. These words remind us that we must honour their legacy by protecting the world that they fought to create. These words remind us to stand up to tyrants, despots and all those who seek to choke the human spirit. These words remind us today to act immediately and with all our might, lest it be too late, as it was for tens of millions of people in that dreadful war.

Etty left us with one more prophecy. In her diary, she wrote:

> "After this war, two torrents will be unleashed on the world: a torrent of loving-kindness and a torrent of hatred... I should take the field against hatred."

Etty's legacy is our inheritance. May the sacrifice of so many heroes and the memory of so many victims grant us the wisdom and determination to safeguard the world from all who threaten the universal values of peace, tolerance and coexistence.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, France associates itself with the statement delivered today on behalf of the European Union.

Sixty-five years ago, peace finally brought an end to one of the bloodiest conflicts in the history of humankind. We meet today to honour the memory of all the victims of that destructive war and to pay tribute to all those, illustrious or unknown, who fought for freedom in the world and won. This gathering is an opportunity to recall our common resolve to fight against all ideologies based on hate, xenophobia, intolerance, racism and anti-Semitism, and, more generally, against all contemporary forms of exclusion.

Sixty-five years ago, a new hope was born for Europe and for the world. The creation of the United Nations embodied the common hope for a better world and laid the foundations for genuine collective security. By reaffirming the sovereign equality of all Members, the Charter of the United Nations responded to a deep-rooted aspiration of peoples and Governments. The achievement of decolonization placed all peoples on an equal footing. And today, human rights, democracy and the rule of law are all recognized as fundamental imperatives.

In this context, Europe has been and continues to be a remarkable example of cooperation among peoples who once were adversaries. Europeans resolved never again to war with one another. Europe, enlarged and enjoying a relationship of trust with Russia, seeks to use its influence and strengths to promote peace and balance.

But the world continues to change, and we must not rely on the illusion that global stability is now assured. In addition to the resurgence of inter-State conflicts, new threats have emerged. Terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, increasing natural disasters, the severe poverty that still affects too many countries, major pandemics, environmental challenges and organized crime are all very real threats that remain difficult to address, especially through the framework of the United Nations, which was not intended for such purposes. These threats have become major concerns because they come on top of unresolved conflicts, regional tensions and ongoing internal strife.

If we wish to remain truly faithful to the memory of the victims and heroes of the Second World War, we must devote all our energies to realizing the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations. Realistic responses to major threats, both old and new, can be mounted only through a multilateral framework. Sixty-five years after the war, it is our enduring duty to honour the promises that gave life to hope in the aftermath of such horrifying conflict.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): Today, we join other nations in marking the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. We remember those millions of men and women who fought with courage and distinction to prevent the spread of fascism and dictatorship and to defend freedom. Successive generations of British people remember with pride the role that their forefathers played in that historic victory and continue to pay

tribute to the sacrifices made by their allies in that common cause.

For the United Kingdom, an act of remembrance is an act of honour — to those who lost their lives, to those who bore the sufferings of war and to those who had the wisdom to build peace. As we mark today the end of the Second World War, so we remember those whose lives are still threatened by conflict and those who still seek or mourn loved ones taken from them by fighting. And we reaffirm our commitment to working to redress such injustices and to ensure lasting peace.

Now more than ever, the world is threatened by problems on a global scale, from poverty and inequality to nuclear proliferation, from climate change to terrorism, from pandemic disease to ethnic cleansing and genocide. We recognize that we cannot maintain security without helping to encourage development, just as we cannot expect development where people are threatened by insecurity, and we cannot expect societies to remain secure and prosperous without respect for human rights and the rule of law.

As we remember the millions of men, women and children who died in the Second World War and the courage of those who came together to fight hatred and extremism, so too we should reaffirm our commitment to this great Organization, which was born directly out of the devastation left in the wake of the war. The founders of the United Nations made a commitment to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war by ensuring peace and security, delivering social progress and better standards of living, supporting fundamental human rights, and promoting justice and respect for the rule of law across the world.

Each year at this commemoration, we should restate our commitment to these principles, and renew and redouble our efforts to promote them. That is the debt that we owe to those brave men and women who died in the Second World War.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Sixty-five years ago, the guns fell silent on battlefields all over Europe, marking the end of the Second World War, the bloodiest and deadliest conflict that humankind has ever known.

Today, we humbly bow our heads to pay tribute to the countless victims of the Second World War — men, women and children, civilians and soldiers alike, citizens of many of the nations assembled here today — who lost their lives, their loved ones or their livelihoods in that terrible war. Among them were also the victims of the Holocaust, whose fate we commemorated in this Hall only a few weeks ago.

The outbreak of the Second World War remains linked with the name of my country. It was Germany that brought unspeakable suffering upon its neighbours and, as a consequence, also upon its own citizens. I stand before the Assembly today to reaffirm that my country has accepted its responsibility for the crimes committed by Nazi Germany. This responsibility we will never abdicate.

Today, we also remember the soldiers of the allied forces — Americans, Soviets, British and French — who sacrificed their lives to liberate Europe from the inhumanity and tyranny of the Nazi regime. Indeed, the early days of May 1945 were a time of liberation for Germany and for large parts of Europe.

Following the end of the Second World War, the western part of my country was presented with a unique opportunity for a fresh start, culturally and politically, built on the cornerstones of democracy, human dignity and human rights. In 1989, the citizens of East Germany and of our Eastern European neighbours successfully initiated a peaceful revolution in order to partake in these values as well.

The Permanent Representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, has recalled how the project of European integration successfully implemented a utopian vision of peace on a continent that had been ravaged by centuries of bloody confrontation. Germany remains committed to further deepening European integration. Also, reconciliation with Russia and the other States that gained their independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union is of special significance for us, considering the enormous price their peoples paid during the war. That is why German Chancellor Angela Merkel will be honoured to attend the commemorative ceremonies to be held in Moscow in a few days.

In view of the suffering of the Baltic States, we have always felt an obligation to strongly support their integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. Poland was a victim of particularly brutal Nazi aggression; we are all the more grateful that our relationship with Poland has developed into a true European friendship. That holds true also for our Central European partners.

Our moral responsibility for the Holocaust, that despicable crime against humanity, entails a particular obligation for Germany towards the State of Israel.

While much of the world still lay in ruins, delegates gathered in San Francisco. Their aim was to repair the fabric of international relations and to provide the world with tools to peacefully manage the world's affairs in order to prevent global catastrophes like the Second World War from ever happening again. The product of their efforts, the United Nations, is the practical expression of their shared hopes for a better world. Germany is grateful for having been given the opportunity to take part in this unique, challenging and indispensable project. We remain committed to supporting the world Organization in all its fields of activity. The international community can count on us.

Since its establishment in 1945, the United Nations has come a long way. And yet, the founding principles of the world Organization remain relevant to this day. In many parts of the world, we have not yet succeeded in achieving the vision, so vividly described in the preamble of the United Nations Charter, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to establish conditions under which human rights and justice can prosper, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

We can yet achieve those aspirations; we can build a safer, more just and more prosperous world; we can overcome the challenges if we learn the lessons of the past. The legacy of the horrors of the Second World War and the legacy of the countless victims commit us and command us to strive to attain those common goals together.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): This year, the international community observes the sixty-fifth anniversary of the historic victory in the Second World War. The date of 9 May marks the victory of the anti-fascist alliance over a horrible regime that wrought terror and destruction all over Europe and other regions of the world.

The appearance of fascism and Nazi ideology had tragic consequences that transcended all known upheavals in the history of modem civilization. The roots of this tragedy were not only in the racist and genocidal nature of the ideology of fascism, but also in the inadmissible retreats and unreasonable compromises made in the period of its emergence and rise. The lessons of Munich have much meaning today, in spite of the distance of six and a half decades.

Facing that extreme threat, the freedom-loving world found the strength to jointly confront and destroy, with great sacrifice, the evil that threatened the progress and basic civilizational values of humanity. The Second World War took the lives of almost 60 million people, a significant number of them through mass-murder operations, especially in Eastern Europe. The fascist regime eliminated millions of people from such specific ethnic groups as Jews, Roma, Slavs and others in the name of the supremacy of the "pure race". Today, 65 years later, we remember those horrors and mourn all innocent victims.

The victory over fascism and Nazism was built into the foundations of modern Europe and the world and into the democratic economic and cultural development of contemporary civilization. This is thus a day of liberation and victory for all fighters against fascism in all countries, and a day of reminder of the need to protect the results of the historic resistance to the evil once unleashed on humankind.

The Republic of Serbia is a country that fought and suffered in both world wars, making significant contributions to the Allied victories and suffering enormous casualties. Serbia, as part of the common State of Yugoslavia, took part in the anti-fascist struggle from the beginning and suffered immense loss of life, compounded by the genocide conducted against the Serbian people and the insane executions of thousands of civilians, including schoolchildren and students, that the fascist occupiers undertook in many places in Serbia.

Our forefathers fought for freedom and human rights and for the universal values of modern civilization. Today, Serbia is a democratic country strongly opposed to any form of violence and extremism, and an open society dedicated to building peace and mutual understanding among nations.

Let us be reminded that the victory over fascism also marked the beginning of a new era in international relations. It significantly changed the political landscape of the world, creating a new foundation for international relations. This very Organization is a product of that victory, established to foster a new era of international cooperation and to prevent conflicts.

Today, the international system that was established in 1945 has been transformed. However, various factors have produced a new set of global circumstances that are, unfortunately, sometimes contrary to some of the noble principles on which the United Nations system is founded. That is why we have to intensify our efforts to increase respect for international law and the fundamental principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. This approach is the only way to strengthen peace, stability and prosperity for all. Building a more equitable global community by promoting justice, peace, liberty and respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms should be the legacy that we must jointly strive to achieve.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): My delegation would like to thank the Russian Federation for its initiative and the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting to mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, for this event provides humankind with a special opportunity to celebrate its great victory over the evil forces of fascism and aggression, peace over war, and justice over injustice.

As a nation which, through the sacrifice of the lives of millions of its people — 2 million in 1945 alone — who bravely took part in their homeland and overseas, shoulder to shoulder with their comrades in the armies of the anti-fascist coalition, in the struggle of the world's peoples for liberation, and which benefited from the victory of this struggle to rise up to win independence and freedom after nearly a century under foreign domination, we join other peoples in paying deepest tribute to the many millions of people in the world who gave their lives in the fight to bring that disastrous war to an end and to all those who fell victim to that man-made scourge. We would like to pay special tribute to the peoples and brave soldiers of the former Soviet Union who bore the main brunt of the battles and with their final one contributed to the elimination of fascism.

While celebrating that great victory of humankind 65 years ago, it is necessary for us to recall that, since that victory and since the United Nations was founded in 1945 with the mandate

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small... and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom",

many peoples of the world have suffered and are continuing to suffer from war and want and injustice. Many have never even had a day of peace. Humankind continues to face the danger of extinction with the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

It is our task today to work harder to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Organization so that it can truly serve as a protector of international peace and security and a promoter of friendly and cooperative relations among nations for development and progress. As we celebrate victory and commemorate the victims, it is our task to ensure that the sacrifices that our forerunner generations made for that victory were not made in vain and that there will be no more victims to commemorate.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I am honoured to have the opportunity to be here on this special day and to participate together with all of those gathered to commemorate the victims of the Second World War and to celebrate the sixty-fifth anniversary of its end. That historic day undoubtedly determined the future of humankind and contemporary history. Without the victory against Nazism and fascism, we would not be here at the United Nations, the key place for international cooperation and multilateralism where all Members of this unique world Organization seek to strengthen world peace and security.

Sixty-five years ago, the victory over evil permitted the creation of the United Nations based on the principles of the equality of peoples and human beings. That victory should not be considered a victory of some particular group of States over another, but as a victory of all nations and peoples against ideologies that supported and encouraged intolerance among human beings and communities on the basis of their nationality, ethnicity, religion or skin colour. Fortunately, the world recognized the evils known as Nazism and fascism and raised a merciless and heavy combat against them.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is proud to be one of the founding Members of the United Nations together with the other successor States of the former Yugoslavia. The peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina were resolute in fighting together against Nazism and fascism during

the Second World War, independently of their nationality and religion. They made sacrifices and suffered for the values that form the basis of the modern world.

I would like to recall that, during the Second World War, some of the largest military battles in the Balkan region took place on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many of our compatriots gave their lives for the ideals of humankind during the war. Those who survived had witnessed the horrors and the cruelty of this tragedy.

Unfortunately, still today, 65 years after this victory, there are forces that fight the universal values of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms that the United Nations defends. We have to remain conscious that, after the Second World War, many countries continued to suffer from wars and conflicts. Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity occurred on a large scale across the world. In the past decades, peace efforts across the world have failed too many times. Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country that suffered greatly in the cause of victory against fascism in the 1940s had to suffer once again in the 1990s.

What can we really do to stop these tragedies? We know that it is not enough to say that such an evil must never be allowed to happen again. We cannot change the past, but I am sure that we can influence our future and think also about the potential victims of present and future violence.

We simply must act to prevent such horrifying events from recurring. As noted in resolution 64/257, we believe that we must all overcome the legacy of the war and work towards reconciliation, international and regional cooperation, and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. These indisputably constitute the only way by which we can reach our common goals.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to all the victims of the Second World War, without forgetting all the victims of more recent wars. I sincerely hope that no victims of any war will ever be forgotten, wherever they may come from.

Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We commend the Russian Federation for its initiative to convene this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly to mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and in commemoration of all victims of the war. The Second World War was the greatest tragedy of the twentieth century. Tens of millions of lives were lost; tens of millions of people were wounded or maimed; families were torn apart; many countries experienced colossal destruction.

That is why the commemoration of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the war is of great historical importance to all peace-loving peoples and Governments throughout the world. Many peoples paid an extremely high price to defeat fascism. For the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the war cost the lives of 25 million of its sons and daughters: not only soldiers, but children, women and elderly people. The acts of liberation carried out by the peoples of the former USSR, and by many other peoples, will remain forever in the pages of history. To mention just a few of those feats, the heroic resistance to the Stalingrad blockade and the siege of Moscow, the victory in the battle of Kursk and the liberation of the concentration camps, such as Auschwitz and Terezin, should ever be in the memory of future generations.

The consequences of the brutal Nazi invasion and the horrors of the Second World War oblige us to remain alert so that never again will the horrors of fascism be repeated. In addition to paying well-deserved tribute today to all the victims of the war, we appeal for international peace. The imposition of armed force and war will never be the solution.

The United Nations was established at the end of the war precisely to promote world peace and prosperity. Today more than ever before, the United Nations must be protected and strengthened. It is a universal duty to respect the Charter: to do so is the best tribute we can pay to the fallen.

Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania): Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. In addition, my country would like to emphasize the following.

Like all wars and military conflicts, the Second World War was an enormous tragedy that left deep and long-lasting scars on the face of Europe. As we mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the battles of the Second World War, we look back at the devastation and the horror caused by that war, with millions of lives destroyed and millions more people bereft or crippled.

We bow our heads with deep respect and sorry in remembrance of all the victims of the Second World War and once again affirm our profound gratitude to those who fought against aggression, occupation, dictatorship and oppression. On this solemn occasion, once again we raise our voices against the atrocities of war, the Holocaust, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including crimes committed by totalitarian regimes.

To our nation, the end of the war did not bring freedom. Instead, it resulted in the occupation and renewed annexation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union. The war ended in a crushing defeat for the totalitarian Nazi regime, but while a part of Europe and the world were celebrating liberation from that regime's deadly grip, my country was subjected to the rule of another totalitarian regime: that of Soviet communism. Our struggle for freedom, independence and justice was to continue for almost five decades, with more human losses, families exiled and torn apart, violence, censorship and oppression pervading all spheres of life.

Only in 1990 did we regain our independence and freedom and restore democracy.

It is therefore only natural that, to us, commemoration of the end of the Second World War in Europe is linked to a reflection on its tragic legacy and on the importance of an honest and thorough debate on history, as a part of the reconciliation process. Such reconciliation, based on an open and fair evaluation of the facts, is, in our view, the right way forward and a guarantee that necessary lessons have been drawn from this bloody page in human history.

In that context, we call for genuine efforts to open up all relevant historical and political archives and for a proper evaluation, on the international level, of the crimes committed by both Nazi and Stalinist totalitarian regimes. We believe that the memory of the crimes committed by all totalitarian regimes must be a collective memory shared and promoted by all. It is our common duty to keep alive the memory of the tragic cost of restoring freedom, democracy and the rule of law, as a constant reminder that common values such as freedom and democracy cannot be taken for granted. They must be upheld, defended and cherished every single day.

The memory of the victims of the Second World War should inspire us to redouble our efforts in order to ensure freedom, peace, security and democracy for us all, and to avoid any repetition of the great cataclysm of the twentieth century. As Members of the United Nations, we appreciate and support the efforts of the Organization aimed at a true assessment of similar tragedies and at preventing them from occurring ever again.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): Let me first of all express my gratitude for the convening of this special solemn gathering. I need not repeat what has already been said so many times about why it is important to remember, commemorate and mourn the victims, so that such things never happen again.

My country, Croatia, was one of those most affected by the events of the Second World War. Large-scale military operations took place on its territory. The occupying forces and the puppet regime committed horrible atrocities. The country was divided, and parts of it were annexed by neighbouring Nazi-fascist regimes. However, very soon after the occupation, the population recognized the true nature of the regime and organized the resistance movement, which, under the leadership of Marshal Tito, began as early as June 1941, two and a half months after the occupation. The partisan movement rapidly gained in strength and by the end of 1941 had organized into brigades and established liberated territories. By the end of the war, the Yugoslav partisan army, with the participation of all peoples and all ethnicities of the former Yugoslavia — a great many of them Croats — had some 500,000 soldiers: more than any other country in occupied Europe. It thus made a large contribution to the achievement of the common goal of the Allied forces and all freedom-loving people. The price they paid was high. Tens of thousands were killed, most of them civilians, and the country was destroyed, but lessons were learned worldwide and nationwide and should not be forgotten.

Croatia is proud to have been not only a member, but a prominent member, of that anti-fascist coalition. Today, 65 years after the war, what do we have? We have the United Nations and a unified Europe, based on anti-fascism, of which Croatia, my country, will very soon become a part. The primary task of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security, but that is not achievable without taking into consideration all three basic pillars — security, development and human rights — and hence fighting any form of racism or xenophobia or any hatred based on somebody being different.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): The delegation of Guyana is grateful for the opportunity afforded by this special solemn commemoration of all the victims of the Second World War to honour the memory of those who perished or otherwise suffered as a consequence of that tragic chapter in human history.

By convening this meeting, the General Assembly has afforded us a moment of special reflection. We reflect on the horrors and cruelty inflicted upon a generation who were forced to endure tyranny, occupation and the violent abuse of their human rights and fundamental freedoms; on the millions who died and the millions more who suffered the pain and anguish of loss — loss of limb, of family, of friend, of comrade and so much more. Among the countless families touched by this tragedy were of my native land, Guyana, then still a colony far removed from the main theatre of conflict.

We reflect also on the heroism of those who struggled against the scourge of war, tyranny and injustice. Many paid the ultimate price for a higher, nobler cause: the cause of human dignity, of freedom, of peace. Their comrades in the same cause ensured that they did not die in vain. An alliance forged across many boundaries formed a common front against a common enemy. Their sacrifice gave us the chance of a better future; their triumph was the harbinger of a brighter day for humankind.

The end of the Second World War ushered in an era of renewed hope, a hope embodied in the United Nations, which was born with a determination, enshrined in its Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

Sixty-five years later, that pledge remains unfulfilled. Our world has witnessed too many wars and untold suffering since. The agenda for peace remains unfinished, as does the agenda for development. Human rights abuses are all too frequent across the globe. Indeed, the cause of a better world beckons still.

Therefore, as we commemorate the victims of the Second World War, it is Guyana's hope that, as nations small and great, we will always renew our resolve to work together to translate the hopes for peace, development and human rights into a tangible reality for all.

Mr. Šćepanović (Montenegro): I have the honour to address the Assembly today on behalf of the Government of Montenegro. Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Today, as we mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the historic victory over fascism, we mourn all victims of the Second World War. At the same time, we want to express our gratitude to the millions of people who gave their lives to create a better, secure and peaceful world.

Today we are proud of our common achievements, and we hail the progress that has been made over the past 65 years in overcoming the tragic legacy of the Second World War and in achieving global peace and security, reconciliation, international and regional cooperation and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Sixty-five years ago, Montenegro participated in celebrating the victory over fascism and the end of one of the greatest tragedies that ever afflicted the peoples of Europe and the world. Montenegro's contribution to the struggle to end the world's greatest catastrophe represents a unique example of a people's struggle for liberty and was, at the same time, an integral part of the overall liberation battle of the former Yugoslav people under the leadership of Marshal Josip Broz Tito.

Montenegro is determined to prevent the recurrence of such a European and international tragedy and has thus made a clear and unequivocal commitment to peace, security and democracy. Respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is the framework of Montenegro's future endeavours in promoting fundamental human rights and creating a peaceful world.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): The Second World War was one of the most devastating conflicts witnessed in human history, and it is imperative that we remember all the victims of the war and pay homage to them and to their memory. We are, therefore, grateful to the General Assembly for convening this meeting and to the delegation of the Russian Federation for having piloted resolution 64/257. I stand here and salute all the valiant young men and women and the populations of all the countries who fought and ensured that we live in a world free from fascism.

It is also absolutely imperative that we use this opportunity to pledge ourselves to and ensure the very fundamental principle and purpose of the United Nations to ensure that successive generations are saved from the scourge of war.

We are commemorating the end of the Second World War in the Western theatre. In this context, as we pay homage and tribute to and salute soldiers and populations from all the countries in Europe and across the Atlantic, I think it is very important to also note and remember the huge contributions and sacrifices made by people in other parts of the world.

This is certainly true of my country. The Indian army, at the start of the Second World War, was a mere 200,000 men. This number swelled to 2.5 million men, the largest all-volunteer force raised in history until then, and it participated in most of the crucial campaigns of the Second World War, suffering nearly 35,000 fatalities and over 100,000 injuries. The sacrifices of our valorous young men and their families have indeed ensured that we live in a world free of fascism.

India had the honour to participate in the San Francisco Conference and is a founding Member of the United Nations. It is important that today, on behalf of my delegation, I pledge our strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and its Charter. I must restate our absolute determination to be part of the international community, which needs to save successive generations from the scourge of war, and to be with the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): My delegation warmly welcomes this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

There is no doubt that the Second World War was a terrible conflict, and it is both salutary and sobering to recall that it was the worst of several unnecessary man-made global catastrophes that made the twentieth century one of the most bitter that humankind has ever known.

The words we use for remembering and rejecting war are endless, as are the appeals for peace and peaceful coexistence among the nations, which should be based on the same values that must guide relations among individuals: truth, justice, forgiveness, active solidarity and freedom. Along with those values come certain indispensable factors for building a renewed international order: the freedom and territorial integrity of each nation, defence of the rights of minorities, an equitable sharing of the Earth's resources, effective plans for disarmament, fidelity to agreements undertaken and an end to religious discrimination and persecution.

The United Nations was born out of the ashes of a world war that was singular in terms of its untold outrages to the dignity of the human person. It is therefore fitting that the very opening lines of the Charter enshrine the immediate link between peace and respect for fundamental human rights.

The inseparability of peace and respect for the rights and dignity of the person is now accepted as self-evident, universal and inalienable. The recognition of the existence of fundamental human rights necessarily presupposes a universal and transcendent truth about humankind that not only precedes all human activity, but also determines it.

At the international level, this common dignity also determines the just measure of national interests. They are interrelational and may never be considered as absolute. In order to promote and defend them, not only is it never right to harm the legitimate interests of other States, but there is also an obligation to help promote and defend the common good of all people. Thus, respect for human dignity is the deepest ethical foundation of our search for peace and the construction of international relations that correspond to the requirements of our common humanity.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this special solemn meeting.

I now declare concluded the special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 126?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.